

Northern BC Mining Economic Impact Study

January 2026

The Mining Association of BC's (MABC) *2026 Northern BC Economic Impact Study* assesses the potential economic impact of 24 critical mineral, precious metal, and steelmaking coal projects under development in the Northwest, North Central and Northeast regions of British Columbia. The study builds on independent analysis commissioned by MABC in 2025 that assessed the economic impact of 27 proposed mines across the province.

Challenging Times for British Columbians

British Columbians are facing unprecedented economic uncertainty. The rupture in Canada-U.S. relations and the rise of protectionism and tariffs is reverberating across our country and province. U.S. tariffs on Canadian steel, aluminum, automobiles and lumber have disrupted supply chains, reduced investment, and led to massive job losses and higher unemployment, while the CUSMA review, and the risk the U.S. could let it expire, remains a significant threat. This comes at a time when our province's economy is slowing, our forestry sector—once BC's most prominent industry—is declining, private sector investment and job growth are weak, and consumers and businesses wrestle with rising costs.

BC and Canada must take bold action to secure our economic sovereignty. Mining has been a cornerstone of BC's economy for over 150 years. Today, the industry is poised for transformative growth. With our vast mineral reserves, we have the potential to unlock billions in near-term economic activity. Nowhere is this more evident than in the North where mining holds the key to real economic benefits — jobs for workers, stability for communities, and economic security and resilience for all British Columbians.

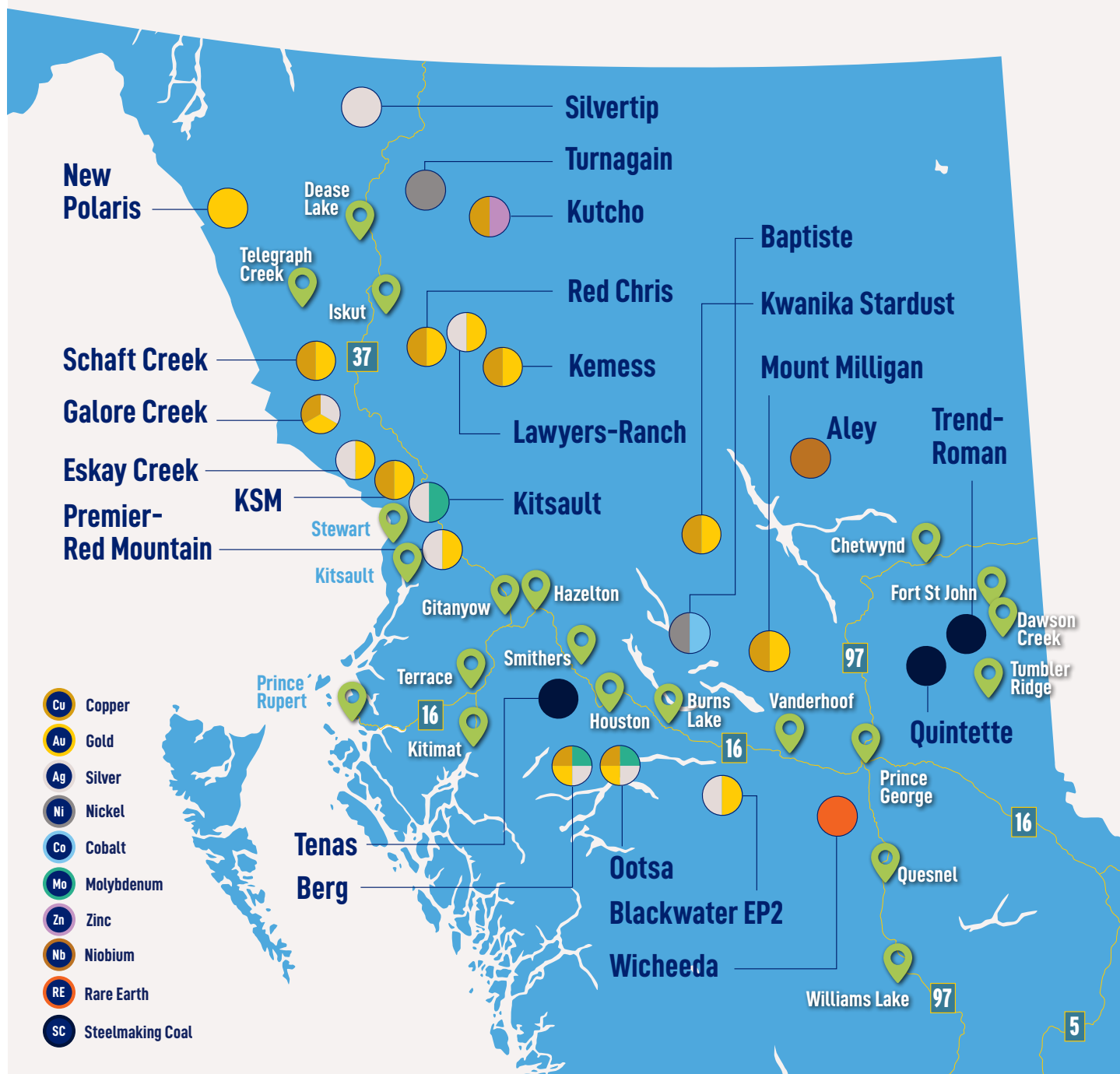
Mining: Northern BC's Economic Powerhouse

The *Northern BC Mining Economic Impact Study* analyzes 16 proposed critical mineral projects, five precious metal, and three steelmaking coal projects in Northern BC. Fourteen are located in the Northwest, eight in North Central, and two in Northeastern BC. Of the 24 projects assessed, 15 are new mining projects, six propose to reopen past producing mines, two are extensions to existing mines, and one is an expansion.

Twenty of the 24 mines were previously assessed in MABC's 2025 economic impact study. Four new projects have been included in this study: Artemis Gold's Blackwater (EP2) expansion, Centerra Gold's Kemess Mine, Thesis Gold's Lawyers-Ranch, and Telkwa Mining's Tenas project. Each project is in an advanced stage of development. Some are in the feasibility and design phase, others are preparing to enter the regulatory process or are under review, while others are nearing the end of their reviews, or awaiting a decision on their permits. Data for the study, conducted by Mansfield Consulting Inc., were collected from interviews, technical reports, economic assessments, and feasibility studies published by proponents and available on the SEDAR website.

Northern BC: the Powerhouse of BC's Mining Industry

The construction of **24 mines** in Northern BC could deliver **\$69 billion** in economic activity for British Columbians



Northern BC's Mining Value Chain

Northern BC is home to numerous municipalities that have a strong connection to BC's mining industry. There are over **844 mine suppliers in Northern BC** who benefit from over **\$643 million worth of procurement from BC mines**.¹ Regional centres benefitting from BC's mining sector include Prince George, Terrace, Smithers, Chetwynd, and Tumbler Ridge. Kitimat is home to Rio Tinto's world-class BC Works aluminum smelter.

Evaluating the Economic Impact of Proposed Mining Projects

The province's mining sector is an economic juggernaut, contributing more than **\$18 billion annually** to the provincial economy, supporting over **40,000 jobs** and generating over **\$3 billion** in government revenue. Nearly 4,000 small, medium and Indigenous-owned businesses support the mining sector and local economies in every corner of the province. Of the 18 mines and two smelters currently operating in BC, eight mines and one smelter are located in the North.

Economic Impact During Development and Construction of 24 Mines

The total combined estimated near-term impacts created in BC during the development and construction of the 24 projects includes:



- Investment of over **\$40 billion**
- Total economic output of over **\$69 billion**
- Total GDP of over **\$35 billion**
- **250,114** person-years of total employment delivering over **\$21 billion** in labour income
- Total government revenues of **\$11.1 billion**

On average, the mining projects would take approximately three years to construct, representing an average investment of **\$1.7 billion**.

16 Critical Minerals Mines

- Investment of **\$36.4 billion**
- Total economic output in BC of **\$62.7 billion**
- Total GDP in BC of **\$32.1 billion**
- **228,753** person-years of total employment delivering **\$19.1 billion** in total labour income
- Total government revenues of **\$10 billion**

5 Precious Metal Mines

- Investment of **\$3 billion**
- Total economic output in BC of **\$5.2 billion**
- Total GDP in BC of **\$2.7 billion**
- **18,029** person-years of total employment delivering **\$1.6 billion** in total labour income
- Total government revenues of **\$865 million**

3 Steelmaking Coal Mines

- Investment of **\$617 million**
- Total economic output in BC of **\$1 billion**
- Total GDP in BC of **\$475 million**
- **3,332** person-years of total employment delivering **\$281 million** in total labour income
- Total government revenues of **\$156 million**

Economic Impact of Mine Operations

The combined total estimated long-term economic benefits created in BC by the 24 mines' ongoing operations over several decades includes:



- Investment of over **\$426 billion**
- Total economic output of **\$661 billion**
- Total GDP of **\$380 billion**
- **1,580,973** person-years of total employment, with labour income of **\$146 billion**
- Total government revenues over **\$135 billion**

According to the study, each of the 24 mines reviewed would generate an average GDP of **\$15.9 billion** during their respective mine life, which averages 19 years.

Nation Building in Northern BC

Mining and critical minerals have rapidly risen to the top of the global policy agenda. They're the essential backbone of the energy transition, crucial to advanced technologies and data centres, and vital to our national security. In fact, critical minerals are now viewed globally as being inseparable from both economic and national security. At the same time, both the provincial and federal governments have recognized the strong economic and nation-building potential of BC mining.

- **Northwest BC and the mineral rich “Golden Triangle” are home to more than 50% of the province’s mineral exploration sector, two operating mines** (Red Chris and Brucejack), Seabridge Gold’s KSM project, **one of the world’s largest undeveloped gold projects**, and other notable development projects. East of the Golden Triangle is the Toodoggone gold and copper district, an exploration hub with a rich history.
- **Three of the four mines on BC’s list² of 18 major projects are in the North.** Centerra Gold’s Mount Milligan Mine extension project received its amended EA certificate and other permits on January 21, 2026. Skeena Resources’ Eskay Creek Revitalization Project may soon receive its EA certificate, following the Tahltan Nation’s vote of support for the project’s Impact Benefit Agreement. And if approved, permits for Newmont’s Red Chris Block Cave Expansion will likely be issued in late 2026. In Southern BC, Teck’s Highland Valley Copper mine life extension has received its EA certificate and is now under construction.
- In May 2025, Premier Eby announced the Province’s Northwest Strategy, a plan to secure billions in mining investment in Northwest BC along with the launch of a modernized land use planning process and conservation initiative with the region’s First Nations.
- In October 2025, the Province tabled legislation to expedite the construction of the North Coast Transmission Line (NCTL) in partnership with local First Nations. The NCTL is a nation-building project that will bring clean electricity to mining projects in the Northwest and North Central regions of BC. The NCTL was referred to the federal government’s Major Projects Office (MPO) in November 2025.
- In August 2025, the Tahltan and Nisga’a Nations and Arrow Transportation Systems acquired Stewart Bulk Terminals in the Port of Stewart, a vital deep-sea facility for exporting critical minerals like copper concentrate from regional mines.
- In 2024, the Governments of Canada and BC announced a joint investment of \$195 million in infrastructure upgrades and improvements to highways 37, 37A and 51 in Northwest BC to support critical mineral project development.

“ Over an average 3 year construction period, a typical critical mineral mine, with an investment of **\$2.3 billion**, would generate **\$3.9 billion** in economic output, **\$2 billion** in GDP, and **\$631 million** in government revenues. Construction would generate **\$1.2 billion** in paycheques for workers. ”

² <https://www2.gov.bc.ca/gov/content/employment-business/look-west-strategy/delivering-major-projects-faster>

Mines Included in the Study

CRITICAL MINERALS MINES (16)

PROJECT	PROPONENT	COMMODITY	CATEGORY
Aley	Taseko Mines Limited	Niobium	New
Baptiste	FPX Nickel Corporation	Nickel-Cobalt	New
Berg	Surge Copper Corp	Copper-Molybdenum	New
Galore Creek	Galore Creek Mining Corp	Copper-Gold	New
Kemess	Centerra Gold	Copper-Gold	Past producing
KSM	Seabridge Gold Inc.	Copper-Gold	New
Kitsault	New Moly	Molybdenum	New
Kutcho	Kutcho Copper Corp	Copper-Zinc	New
Kwanika-Stardust	Northwest Copper Corp	Copper	New
Mount Milligan	Centerra Gold Inc.	Copper-Gold	Extension
Ootsa	Surge Copper Corp	Copper-Molybdenum	New
Red Chris	Newmont Corporation, Imperial Metals	Copper-Gold	Extension
Schaft Creek	Copper Fox Metals Inc.	Copper-Molybdenum	New
Turnagain	Gigametals Corporation	Nickel-Cobalt	New
Wicheeda	Defense Metals Corporation	Rare Earths	New
Silvertip	Coeur Mining Inc.	Silver-Zinc-Lead	Past producing

PRECIOUS METALS MINES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY (5)

MINE NAME	OWNER	COMMODITY	CATEGORY
Blackwater EP2	Artemis Gold Inc.	Gold	Expansion
Eskay Creek	Skeena Resources Limited	Gold-silver	Past producing
Lawyers-Ranch	Thesis Gold	Gold-silver	New
New Polaris	Canagold Resources Ltd.	Gold-antimony	Past producing
Premier and Red Mountain	Ascot Resources Limited	Gold	Past Producing

STEELMAKING COAL MINES INCLUDED IN THE STUDY (3)

MINE NAME	OWNER	COMMODITY	CATEGORY
Quintette	Conuma Resources	Steelmaking Coal	Past producing
Tenas	Telkwa Mining Limited	Steelmaking Coal	New
Trend Roman	Conuma Resources	Steelmaking Coal	New

Mining Can Secure BC's Economic Future

Mining is now one of the biggest opportunities we will see in this lifetime. But to turn this nation-building opportunity into real jobs and benefits, we need mining projects to get through permitting and on to a final investment decision and construction.

The Government of British Columbia Needs to Set the Conditions for Success:

Accelerate Permitting

Right now, permitting delays are the number one barrier holding back BC. They are holding back thousands of jobs, and billions in investment and new revenue for government. A year ago, government committed to accelerate permitting. To be sure, progress is being made, but it's time for greater urgency and bold action to accelerate mine permitting and get it done.

Invest in First Nations Capacity

First Nations want to be full partners in responsible resource development, but they need the governance, administrative, and technical capacity to participate in mining project reviews. Supporting this important work reduces project risk, gets permits moving, and advances economic reconciliation and First Nations partnerships in a meaningful way.

Invest in Skills Training

Achieving this nation-building opportunity requires a strong, skilled workforce that can respond to the dynamic needs of the mining industry. Mining needs skilled workers: more welders, mechanics, equipment operators, and geoscientists to run today's mines and build tomorrow's. According to the Mining Industry Human Resources Council, our industry will require a net increase of between 5,000 and 12,000 workers over the next decade – a number that far exceeds historical workforce growth.

It's time to get more mines online and get British Columbians working in every corner of our province.

Read the report [here](#)

